



Washington Chapter
Union of Black Episcopalians
Post Office Box 55038 – Washington, DC 20040-5038

April 23, 2009

Dear UBE Supporters:

The Washington Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE) writes to invite you to participate in a gathering of Afro-Anglicans/Black Episcopalians in the winter of 2010 to accomplish three things:

- Collectively revisit the mission and purpose of UBE;
- Determine if the will and capacity exists to rebuild UBE for today's context; and/OR
- Develop a plan and identify resources to create a new entity to advance our shared interests and aspirations.

During the past year, members of the Washington Chapter UBE fully engaged the national leadership of UBE (or the Union) and have participated in several national forums concerning the Afro-Anglican/Black Episcopal community and the broader church. We became acutely aware of the leadership and operational limitations of the UBE and regret to report that the Union has inadequate operating resources. The Union lacks systems to conduct business as a national organization. And, we also believe that the Union lacks the type of leadership necessary to boost us to a higher level.

These issues are symptomatic of an organization that refuses to articulate and project an inspired vision. Our experience with the national organization revealed that the Union is not transparent and unresponsive to assistance or counsel from others. We believe that these longstanding challenges have eroded the internal and external credibility of the UBE.

Afro-Anglicans/Black Episcopalians need an organization and leaders capable of developing and advancing a programmatic agenda; articulating a relevant policy agenda; identifying and equipping lay and clergy leaders; and assisting local congregations and churches in building greater leadership capacity.

The 2010 convening is intended to be an outcome driven and substantive working session designed to create an action plan to empower Afro-Anglicans/Black Episcopalians to more effectively minister, lead, and serve in an increasingly changing and multicultural context. The increasingly complex and dynamic setting in which we serve and minister requires us to critically evaluate our current capacity to fulfill a collective calling. Too few of our churches have a clearly articulated plan for longevity. Some of our historic parishes that had membership levels over 1,000 congregants from the 1950s through the 1970s now have less than 300 members. While this may not be true of all of our churches, collectively we face long-term demographic and financial challenges.

Building the beloved community requires a strong Afro-Anglican/Black Episcopal presence and ministry. Yet, hierarchical leadership within the church continues to question the relevance of predominantly and historically Afro-Anglican/Black Episcopal congregations. The national church has yet to articulate a

meaningful vision and definition of multiculturalism that respects the gifts we bring and the current UBE has brought forth no solutions.

Given this backdrop, we seek to analyze the current capacity of UBE. We believe the stakes are too high and the waters too rough for us to continue with the current situation that erodes the credibility and effectiveness of the whole organization when interacting with the national church.

Our decision to host the 2010 convening is grounded in a commitment to the health of our local parishes, the development of our emerging lay and clergy leaders, the need for increased understanding and reconciliation within the diversity of Afro-Anglicanism, and the continued importance of broad and effective participation in the wider Episcopal and Anglican community. Creating a way forward will require us to engage in a difficult and necessary dialogue about the future of UBE. We are prepared to join others in developing a plan and identifying resources to create a new entity. We look forward to receiving your feedback and input as we plan this historic convening for the winter of 2010.

Sincerely,

Janice Wormack

Janice Wormack
Washington Chapter President